

**REMARKS**

In the Final Office Action mailed March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2007, all pending claims 1-24 are rejected. Claims 1, 3, 4, 7, 10, 12, 13, 17-19 and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,625,876 ("Gilhousen"). Claims 2, 9, 11, 16 and 24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gilhousen in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,011,787 ("Nakano"). Claims 5, 6, 8, 14, 15, 20, 21 and 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gilhousen in view of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0154610 ("Tiedemann").

The Examiner conducted a phone interview at the request of Applicants' Attorney on March 6<sup>th</sup> and March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2007. Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for granting their interview request. Gilhousen (5,625,876), the primary reference relied on by the Office in rejecting all pending claims, was discussed during the interviews. The Examiner and Applicants' Attorney also discussed what is meant by Applicants' "forcing always-softer reverse link handoff conditions" claim term. Based on the interviews, Applicants amend herein several of the pending claims so that always-softer reverse link handoff conditions are forced at a Radio Base Station (RBS) for mobile stations served by the RBS based on assigning one or more additional reverse links from non-serving sectors of the RBS if a reverse link is assigned to a mobile station from a serving sector of the RBS.

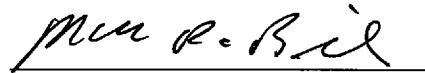
Gilhousen discloses determining when to initiate forward and reverse link softer handoff conditions in a sectorized RBS based on pilot signal strength measurements, and thus is conditional. Further, additional reverse links are assigned in Gilhousen only from those sectors which serve mobile stations on a forward link. Thus, additional reverse link assignments in Gilhousen are not made from non-serving RBS sectors. Gilhousen does not teach or suggest forcing always-softer reverse link handoff conditions at a RBS for mobile stations served by the RBS based on assigning one or more additional reverse links from non-serving sectors of the

RBS if a reverse link is assigned to a mobile station from a serving sector of the RBS. For at least this reason, Applicants respectfully submit that all claims presently pending herein are patentable over the Gilhousen reference, and therefore request withdrawal of this rejection.

For the forgoing reasons, it is respectfully urged that the present application is now in condition for allowance and notice to such effect is respectfully requested. If any fees are required please charge them to Deposit Account No. 18-1167.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: April 26, 2007

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